

SAT 8TH APR 78 v WALTHAMSTOW AV. (14) AWAY LOST 0-1

AVENUE STROLL IT — AND ALL OVER BLUES

WALTHAMSTOW AVENUE 1, WYCOMBE WANDERERS 0

WYCOMBE Wanderers' hopes of the runners-up spot in the Isthmian League received a setback on Saturday, when Walthamstow Avenue, playing some good football, deserved to win by more than the single goal.

Avenue were in control for all of the first half, and a large part of the second, and only some solid defensive work by the Blues' back four kept the score in bounds.

As early as the seventh minute, it was clear that the home attack was going to cause some problems when Peter Spittle was forced to make a magnificent save to keep out a blistering shot from Cotter. And again a minute later he was at full-stretch after a fine through ball from Phil Sammons. Alan Phillips was hard put to it to stop John Lewis opening the Avenue account almost immediately after.

On 16 minutes, what seemed to be the inevitable goal came. A perfectly placed high corner from the left by Dick Sedgwick gave Wells a copybook header into the corner of the net. Walthamstow were looking particularly strong on the left flank. Attacking moves started from Richard Bradford in defence, and Alan Hunter and Sedgwick developed them well. Hunter in particular had a fine game, giving Paul Birdseye a busy afternoon.

TWO STRIKERS

Another problem for Wanderers was the attacking role of Wells from the heart of the Avenue defence, and the Blues' rearguard often found itself in a four to four situation.

Wycombe again saw fit to play with only two strikers up — Derek Harris and Tony Horseman — and on those occasions when the visitors did mount an attack, there was never enough firepower up front to test the Avenue defence.

As the game developed, Walthamstow's attacks increased, and Mead had to turn in a superb performance for Wycombe. His positional play was without fault, and his defensive headers were always well placed. Alan Phillips gave support.

One of Wycombe's rare moves, from a corner, saw Holifield's perfect flag-kick neatly touched on by Horseman, but Phillips was rooted to the spot.

Walthamstow's play continued to be a joy to watch. Smooth passing involving three or four and sometimes five players showed what a good side Avenue can be on their day. However, Avenue's finishing power was suspect, and attacks often broke down at the critical stage. In midfield they were

superb and at the back in full control.

At half-time, Avenue brought on Steve Scudder for Lewis, and the Walthamstow attack was strengthened. Scudder ran well on the left, and got a vicious, low angled shot at Spittle within two minutes and then a good cross from Scudder found Cotter close in, but the header was well saved by Spittle low down.

At 61 minutes, Wycombe brought Dylan Evans on for Roger Day, and the Blues entered their best patch. Not only did this move strengthen the attack to a 4-4-3 formation, but Evans played well, and Wycombe began to look for the first time as though they might equalise.

SHOT BLOCKED

A Holifield corner was plucked off Phillips' head, and Harris, put through by McKenzie sent Willson full-stretch to tip round the post. The back four also began to move up, and a Kennedy corner on the left landed at Mead's feet, only for his shot to be blocked on the line by Bradford.

Wycombe's best move of the match was started by John Priestley, who put a long ball through to Horseman. 'Bodger' touched on to Evans, and Kennedy only went just wide with the final shot.

A McKenzie 'special' was only parried by Willson and Holifield had a clear chance to equalise from the melee, but his header from close in grazed the outside of an upright.

Towards the end Walthamstow again reverted to attack. Webberley shot wide, Phillips was forced to head over his own bar, and from the corner Hunter volleyed inches high.

Wycombe: Spittle, Birdseye, Priestley, Mead, Phillips, Day (Evans 61 mins), McKenzie, Holifield, Harris, Kennedy, Horseman.

Walthamstow: Willson, Webberley, Bradford, Sammons, Wells, Lewis (Scudder 45 mins), Walder, Cotter, Sedgwick, Hunter, Worrall.

Oh Wycombe you muffed it!

Wycombe Youth 2, Maidenhead Youth 3 (aet)

WYCOMBE Youth went out of the quarter final of the Berger Paints Youth Cup after being two goals up with 23 minutes to go.

They allowed Maidenhead back into the game and paid the penalty of allowing the game to go into extra time.

Wycombe were without regular goalkeeper Chris Smith, who was committed to a league game with Flackwell Heath the same evening, and although, deputy Chris Way did a good job it took time for both him and the players to adapt to each other's style of play.

In the first half Wycombe's midfield trio of Jacobs, Collins and Halstead were in control and rarely allowed Maidenhead to break. A tricky wind made ball control difficult.

Maidenhead's scoring chances in the first half were off target, although a shot by Wigmore was pushed clear

of the far post by Way and another screecher went over the bar.

Wycombe pressed hard and eventually went ahead when from a Steve Harvey pass, Cordice lobbed from 20 yards out.

Wycombe opened the second half strongly. Pearce was unlucky with a fierce shot and then Kotvics just failed from a good cross. Wycombe were awarded a penalty for a handball offence and Robin Collins converted from the spot in the 79th minute.

Maidenhead hit back to score in the 82nd and 87th minutes and clinched the winner eight minutes into the second period of extra time. Stacey (2) and Munday were their scorers.

Wycombe: C. Way, G. Smith, M. Monaghan, C. Ludlow, S. Harvey, R. Collins, J. Jacobs, K. Halstead, N. Cordice, J. Kotvics, G. Pearce. Sub Stanners (95 mins).